

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on November 19, 2009, at 10 a.m. in SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct an executive business meeting.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on November 19, 2009, at 2:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Dr. Andrea Buck, a physician detailed to the Veterans' Affairs Committee staff from the VA Inspector General's Office be granted the privilege of the floor for the duration of the debate on S. 1963.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Rachel Pelham of my staff be given the privilege of the floor for the rest of the day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for Randoe Dice, a detailee on my staff, Ben Bremen, Anne Pick, and Joseph Moon, interns on my staff, be granted the privileges of the floor during debate of H.R. 3590.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IRAN'S HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 355, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 355) expressing the sense of the Senate that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has systematically violated its obligations to uphold human rights provided for under its constitution and international law.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, recent events have made abundantly clear that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is failing, and failing badly, to live up to its own professed ideals and its international commitments to protect the human rights of its citizens and others. I urge my colleagues to join with me in supporting a resolution, S. Res. 355, submitted today, condemning Iran's deplorable

human rights record, calling for an immediate release of those wrongfully imprisoned in violation of their rights, and urging the restoration of meaningful human rights to all of Iran's citizens.

Iran's 1979 constitution, the result of a revolution against years of political and human-rights abuses by the regime of the Shah, guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms. Moreover, Iran is a signatory to four major human rights treaties. And yet its shameful record of executions that contravene international standards; of repression of the rights of women and minorities, including religious minorities; of outrageous attacks on the rights of peaceful assembly and protest; and of unwarranted arrest and detention of foreigners, including Americans, all make a mockery of these commitments.

Just last week, the Iranian Government again demonstrated its contempt for human rights and the rule of law when it announced it would pursue espionage charges against three young Americans who crossed Iran's border with Iraq. These allegations are just the latest telling example on a long list of abuses.

American Robert Levinson has been missing in Iran for more than two years, during which the Iranian regime has denied having any information on his whereabouts and has blocked international attempts to discover his fate. In January 2009, the Iranian Government jailed Iranian-American journalist Roxana Saberi and charged and convicted her of espionage after a one-hour show trial that mocked even the most basic standards of due process and law, and then sentenced her to eight years in prison before releasing her a few months later. Esha Momeni, a student at California State University, Northridge, was imprisoned last fall for her peaceful activities in support of women's rights in Iran. The regime's abuses have even touched Nobel peace prize winner Shrin Ebadi, whose Center for Defenders of Human Rights was forced to close by the government in December 2008.

None of these recent abuses, however, as deplorable as they are, have shocked the conscience of the world so severely as the Iranian Government's actions in response to this year's disputed presidential elections. Prompted by justifiable concern that their will had been thwarted in a rigged election, thousands of Iranian citizens took to the streets, firmly but peacefully exercising their rights and demanding the democracy their government purports to embody. The regime's response was to launch violent, heavy-handed attacks against these peaceful protestors, using government security forces and paramilitary militias under government control to repress the legitimate expression of a valid grievance. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reports that this violence resulted in at least a dozen deaths, and hundreds of injuries.

In the aftermath, the Iranian Government imprisoned dozens of its citizens and conducted a mass trial of more 100 of them, many of whom bore clear signs of physical abuse. The government sentenced at least four of these prisoners to death on the basis of dubious confessions, likely produced under duress and abuse.

It is proper and appropriate for the Senate to make clear its determination that these acts violate international human rights standards, Iran's own professed commitments, and common decency. The resolution introduced today would record the Senate's condemnation of Iran's woeful human rights record; remind the Iranian government of its domestic and international commitments to human rights; call for the immediate release of all those held for their peaceful exercise of rights of free expression, assembly and association; and urge Iran to extend full legal rights to those imprisoned. It calls for the Iranian Government to guarantee humane treatment of those in detention; to halt immediately state-sanctioned violence against its own citizens; to allow unrestricted communication and access to information; and to respect the rights of the Iranian people to free speech, a free press, free expression of religion, freedom of association, and freedom of assembly.

It is a tragic irony that the government perpetrating these deplorable acts of violence and abuse came to power three decades ago because the Iranian people rejected the abuses and violence of a previous regime. Now following in the repressive footsteps of that previous regime, the current Iranian Government has been widely condemned by the community of nations. Passage of this resolution would add the U.S. Senate's loud and clear voice of condemnation to the many voices inside Iran, and out, calling for the restoration of basic human rights for the Iranian people.

Mr. KAUFMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc; that any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 355) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 355

Whereas the 1979 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran supposedly guarantees certain human rights and fundamental freedoms, which encompass civil and political rights, along with economic, social, and cultural rights;

Whereas the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party to four major United Nations human rights treaties: the Convention on the Rights of the Child (which it ratified on July 13, 1994), the International Convention on the

Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (which it ratified on August 29, 1968), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (both of which its ratified on June 24, 1975);

Whereas the Government of Iran has routinely violated the human rights of its citizens, including—

(1) torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, including flogging, and amputations;

(2) high incidence and increase in the rate of executions carried out in the absence of internationally recognized safeguards, including public executions and executions of juvenile offenders;

(3) stoning as a method of execution and persons in prison who continue to face sentences of execution by stoning;

(4) arrests, violent repression, and sentencing of women exercising their right to peaceful assembly, a campaign of intimidation against women's rights defenders, and continuing discrimination against women and girls;

(5) increasing discrimination and other human rights violations against persons belonging to religious, ethnic, linguistic, or other minorities;

(6) ongoing, systematic, and serious restrictions of freedom of peaceful assembly and association and freedom of opinion and expression, including the continuing closures of media outlets, arrests of journalists, and the censorship of expression in online forums such as blogs and websites; and

(7) severe limitations and restrictions on freedom of religion and belief, including arbitrary arrest, indefinite detention, and lengthy jail sentences for those exercising their right to freedom of religion or belief, including a provision in the proposed draft penal code that sets out a mandatory death sentence for apostasy, the abandoning of one's faith;

Whereas, since March 9, 2007, Robert Levinson, a United States citizen, has been missing in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Government of Iran has provided little information on his whereabouts or assistance in ensuring his safe return to the United States;

Whereas Ja'far Kiani was publicly stoned to death in July 2007 in the Islamic Republic of Iran in contravention of an order from the Head of the Judiciary granting a temporary stay of execution;

Whereas, since May 2008, Reza Taghavi, a 71-year-old Iranian-American, has been imprisoned without a trial or formal charges;

Whereas, on October 15, 2008, authorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran jailed Esha Momeni, a graduate student at California State University, Northridge, for her peaceful activities in connection with the women's rights movement in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and refused to grant her permission to leave Iran for 10 months following her release from prison in November 2008;

Whereas Iranian-American journalist Roxana Saberi was jailed in January 2009 and sentenced in a closed-door, one-hour trial to eight years in prison for charges of espionage before her release in May 2009;

Whereas, on June 19, 2009, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concerns about the increasing number of illegal arrests not in conformity with the law and the illegal use of excessive force in responding to protests following the June 12, 2009, elections, resulting in at least dozens of deaths and hundreds of injuries;

Whereas the Government of Iran closed the Center for Defenders of Human Rights, headed by Nobel Peace prize winner Shirin Ebadi,

in December 2008, and the Association of Iranian Journalists in August 2009, the country's largest independent association for journalists;

Whereas, on August 1, 2009, authorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran began a mass trial of over 100 individuals in connection with election protests, most of whom were held incommunicado for weeks, in solitary confinement, with little or no access to their lawyers and families, many of whom showed signs of torture and drugging;

Whereas, in early October 2009, the judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran sentenced four individuals to death after the disputed presidential election, without providing the individuals adequate access to legal representation during their trials;

Whereas the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei, issued a statement on October 28, 2009, effectively criminalizing dissent regarding the national election in the Islamic Republic of Iran this past June, further restricting the right to freedom of expression;

Whereas the Government of Iran does not allow independent nongovernmental associations and labor unions to perform their role in peacefully defending the rights of all persons;

Whereas, on November 4, 2009, security forces in the Islamic Republic of Iran used brutal force to disperse thousands of protesters, resulting in a number of injuries and arrests, in violation of international standards regarding the proportionate use of force against peaceful demonstrations;

Whereas the Government of Iran expelled students from universities, particularly over the past two years, in reprisal for their being critical of the government;

Whereas the Government of Iran has imposed restrictions on the travel of individuals, including artists and filmmakers since the recent elections, in reprisal for their political views or their criticism of the government, such as those presently imposed on human rights lawyer Abdolfattah Soltani, human rights activist Emad Baghi, film director Jafar Panahi, and actress Fatemeh Motamed Arya; and

Whereas, according to Amnesty International, at least 346 people were known to have been executed in 2008, including eight juvenile offenders and two men who were executed by stoning; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) calls for authorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran to respect the rights of the people of Iran to freedom of speech, press, religion, association, and assembly;

(2) condemns the Government of Iran's human rights violations and calls on the Government of Iran to hold those responsible accountable for their actions;

(3) reminds the Government of Iran of its constitutional obligations under its 1979 Constitution and four international covenants to which it is a signatory;

(4) calls for the immediate release from detention of opposition figures, human rights defenders, journalists, and all others held for peacefully exercising their right to expression, assembly, and association;

(5) urges the Government of Iran to ensure that anyone placed on trial for committing acts of violence or other clearly criminal acts benefits from all of his or her rights to a fair trial, including proceedings that are open to the public, the right to be represented by independent counsel, and guarantees that no statements shall be admitted into evidence that were shown to have been obtained through torture, inhumane, or degrading treatment;

(6) calls for the Government of Iran to ensure those currently in detention are treated humanely, to provide detainees immediate prompt access to their families, lawyers, and

any medical treatment that may be needed, and calls for the Government of Iran to hold accountable those responsible for torture of detainees; and

(7) calls for authorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran, consistent with their obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to guarantee all persons the "freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing, or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice".

ORDER FOR PRINTING OF AMENDMENT NO. 2786

Mr. KAUFMAN. I ask unanimous consent that amendment No. 2786 be printed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, and in consultation with the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Finance, pursuant to Public Law 103-296, appoints Jagadeesh Gokhale, of Maryland, vice Sylvester Schieber, of Michigan, as a member of the Social Security Advisory Board.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2009

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:45 a.m. tomorrow, Friday, November 20; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate resume debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3590, as provided for under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, there will be no rollcall votes during tomorrow's session of the Senate. The next vote will occur at 8 p.m. on Saturday, November 21. That vote will be on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3590.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. KAUFMAN. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order, following the remarks of Senators BROWBACK and HATCH.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I thank my colleague.